

JONATHAN SAMUEL ROSS

Writer's Biography & Portfolio

As with many writers, Jonathan began his career at a tender age, penning at the age of seven a short original story that explained how the fearsome pirate Blackbeard (Edward Teach) first acquired his cutlass (hint: a swordfish was involved). A prodigious reader from an early age, Jonathan continued his creative writing endeavors, winning various awards and local acclaim and dominating his high school literary magazine with his output. In his senior year of high school (1987-88), Jonathan wrote a compelling, in-depth article highlighting the poignant reminiscences of local Vietnam veterans for the school paper, judged by Columbia University's Journalism School to be in the top 1% of high school papers nationwide. The article won a prestigious award for "best feature writing" from *New York Newsday*, the highest circulation paper in the state, and Jonathan was subsequently published in *Newsday* for that article as well as for his contributions to a special edition featuring top high school and college journalists.

During his undergraduate years at Duke University (1988-1992), Jonathan majored in Political Science (with a focus on International Relations) and English. His eerily prescient senior year graduate-level Political Science thesis (completed as two separate papers) focused on domestic counter-terrorism ("*The Enemy Within: America's Domestic War Against Terrorism*") and counter-insurgency campaigns ("*Broken Hearts and Untapped Minds: A Comparison of the Failed U.S. Pacification Effort in Vietnam 1961-1973 with The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*"). These papers were completed under the supervision of his advisor, Dr. Timothy Lomperis, a highly regarded professor (who served in Vietnam with the Defense Intelligence Agency) and recipient of the undergraduate teaching award who has subsequently moved on to Saint Louis University.

Jonathan was also honored with the very first Reynolds Price Scriptwriting Award, named after the critically acclaimed novelist and highly prominent James B. Duke Professor of English, when a screenplay that he wrote ("*Dust of Life*") was deemed the best piece of dramatic writing produced by a Duke undergraduate. Prior to graduating from Duke, Jonathan also completed his first Hollywood internship with producer Thom Mount, best known as having been the youngest head of production in Universal's history and the producer of such hits as "*Bull Durham*" and "*Tequila Sunrise*." Mr. Mount's glowing recommendation letter and comment that Jonathan, "Reminded him of Bo Goldman" (a two-time Oscar-winning writer) was taken as a sign that a bright future lay ahead if luck, talent and persistence all came together.

In 1992, at the age of twenty-two, Jonathan was accepted into the Graduate Screenwriting Program of USC's School of Cinema-Television, a relatively rare privilege considering the fact that at the time, the acceptance rate was approximately only 6% of applicants, making the school harder to get into than Harvard Law School, with relatively few applicants accepted straight from their undergraduate institution. While at USC, Jonathan was a finalist, in his sole year of eligibility, for the Jack Nicholson Screenwriting Award. He was also approved by Lawrence Turman, the head of the Peter Stark Producing Program, to be among the first non-Peter Stark students to enroll in one of their exclusive classes, a Studio Management course taught by former Warner Bros. executive Lance Young. Jonathan also completed an Entertainment Law course and performed his second internship in creative development with Trilogy Entertainment, who had recently produced the hit films "*Backdraft*" and "*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*." Jonathan also landed his first paying job as a freelance story analyst for New Line Cinema, which he held throughout his second and final year at USC.

Following graduation from USC, Jonathan continued on the creative development path, transitioning from New Line to a paid development position back at Trilogy Entertainment. When a "regime change" happened internally, Jonathan moved on to working for literary manager and producer Melinda Jason, a former agent best known for breaking former entertainment attorney

Ron Bass' writing career. Growing frustrated with the world of development, Jonathan began creatively consulting in the world of "New Media," today referred to as digital entertainment.

Based on the strength of a spec political action-thriller ("*Night Comes Falling*") that he wrote, Jonathan landed his first agency representation at ICM. Unfortunately, despite a number of development meetings and interest from major production companies, the script did not sell and while Jonathan continued his writing, he also began embracing the world of technology, realizing that eventually, "traditional" entertainment and the newly emerging digital delivery channels would eventually cross-fertilize each other and probably intersect.

Jonathan has successfully built a career as a highly knowledgeable consultant, and currently operates his own business, Black Rock Consulting, which provides project management, strategic planning and development, marketing, corporate communications and creative services to clients in the Media/Entertainment, Technology and Lifestyle/Recreational industries. Additionally, in May 2007 Jonathan was invited to become a partner in Tomahawk Partners, a strategic consultancy and business advisory firm that is focused on global opportunities involving the creation and development of physical, logistical and technological infrastructure.

A full list of completed creative projects in all media is available, and Jonathan continues to develop original new material for various media both as a solo writer and in collaboration with other talented individuals.

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JONATHAN SAMUEL ROSS

FICTION PORTFOLIO (1995 – Present)

SCREENPLAYS:

“Mountain of Fire” (Action-Adventure)
“The Sissy” (Comedy / Fantasy)
“Free Agent” (Comedy / Drama, with Paul Ross & Tony Kayden)
“Others” (Action-Thriller / Sci-Fi, with Paul Ross)
“Demon Wind” (Western, with Paul Ross)
“Cleopatra’s Needle” (Action-Thriller / Sci-Fi, with Tony Kayden)
“Requiem” (Thriller / Crime)
“Night Comes Falling” (Action-Thriller)
“Streets of Shame” (Historical Action / Drama, with Paul Ross)

TELEPLAYS:

“Borderland” (Pilot & Bible for Original 1 Hour Dramatic Series)
“The Golem” (Spec writing sample for *“The X-Files”*)

NOVELS:

“Demon Wind” (Based on original screenplay, *in progress*)
“Voyages: A Sailor’s Tale” (with Paul Ross & H. Norman McCullough)

SHORT STORIES:

“The Wine Dark Sea”
“The Rugaru” (First chapter of potential novel)

PITCHES / TREATMENTS:

(For Various Media / Details Available Upon Request)

THRILLER

“Indian Country” (proposed screenplay / novel)
“Legacy of the Assassins” (proposed screenplay / novel)
“Nephilim” (proposed screenplay / novel)
“Twilight’s Last Gleaming” (proposed screenplay / novel)
“The Gamekeeper” (proposed screenplay / novel)
“Last of the Just” (proposed screenplay)
“The Key to November” (proposed screenplay)
“The Night Man” a.k.a. *“The Keeper”* (proposed screenplay)
“Moon Watch” a.k.a. *“Bloodlines”* (proposed screenplay)

PITCHES / TREATMENTS (CONT'D):

COMEDY

“Surgery School” (proposed screenplay)

“Rinty” (proposed screenplay)

DRAMA

“The Indifference of Heaven” (proposed screenplay)

“To The Sound of Drums” (proposed novel / screenplay)

“Wingate of Palestine” (proposed screenplay)

WESTERN

“Whistle Down the Wind” (proposed novel / screenplay)

SCI-FI / FANTASY

“Silent Running” (proposed novel / screenplay / interactive game)

Note: Earlier fiction works completed prior to 1995 as an undergraduate and graduate student have been omitted. Non-fiction writing is not included in this list. All properties have been previously copyrighted through the Library of Congress and/or registered with the Writers Guild of America.

COMPLETED OR IN PROGRESS PROJECT SYNOPSES

SCREENPLAYS

"Mountain of Fire" (Action-Adventure)

In 1938 China, a down-on-his-luck jaded American expatriate turned gunrunner and smuggler and his Chinese partner are drawn into a sweeping adventure searching for the legendary lost tomb of Genghis Khan, racing against several factions vying for the tomb's riches including the Japanese, a corrupt Chinese warlord, a vicious Triad gangster and a mysterious female anthropologist whose loyalties are unclear until the final showdown in the bowels of the lost tomb.

"The Sissy" (Comedy / Fantasy)

Following the Norman Invasion of England in 1066, a lone Saxon noble schemes to replace his eldest son, whom he considers unfit to inherit his lands and title because he is a "sissy," with his more accomplished younger son by conspiring with a Viking warlord to arrange an honorable death for his eldest child. However, the Viking warlord dispatches his inept only son to perform the deed, and ultimately the hapless pair and their respective bands of misfits must save the last remaining Saxon stronghold in Britain from the conquering Normans.

"Free Agent" (Drama / Comedy, with Paul Mark Ross & Tony Kayden)

An idealistic but idiosyncratic Major League Baseball pitcher whose better days are behind him receives an indefinite suspension when he protests the deterioration of his beloved game by mooning a stadium during a televised broadcast. Embarking on a fishing trip to visit his former minor league coach, now a fishing guide in the Four Corners region, our hero reluctantly finds himself helping to coach an underprivileged teenage baseball team that hasn't won a game in years. In the process, he falls in love with the team's female coach while mentoring a Native American, with whom he shares a special bond -- our hero converses with the spirit of Babe Ruth, while his young protégé communes with the spirit of the Lakota warrior and mystic, Crazy Horse.

"Others" (Action-Thriller / Sci-Fi, with Paul Mark Ross)

During the late autumn of 1944, as Germany launches a last-ditch surprise attack in Belgium that comes to be known as the Battle of the Bulge, a joint American-British commando team is dispatched on a secret mission to the Austrian Alps to gather intelligence on an alleged "National Redoubt" from which the Nazis intend to fight a protracted guerrilla war. However, unknown to all members of the team save one, the real purpose of the mission is to discover whether the Germans have actually recovered living extra-terrestrials in a mysterious crash over Germany and in effect made "first contact" with an alien race whose intentions are unknown.

"Demon Wind" (Western, with Paul Mark Ross)

See commentary for this title under "Novels." This early draft may eventually be reworked to account for plot changes and new character development in the in-progress novel.

SCREENPLAYS (CONT'D)

"Cleopatra's Needle" (Action-Thriller / Sci-Fi, with Tony Kayden)

What appears to be a bizarre natural catastrophe erupting in New York City quickly threatens to render the country, and eventually this planet, as sterile as Mars. A disillusioned scientist and jaded homicide detective discover that what appears to be a viral outbreak is actually the work of a horrendously destructive, silicon-based alien entity that has lain dormant in an Egyptian obelisk for thousands of years. This discovery pits them against the military, which is simply attempting to destroy the terrifying life form without properly understanding its complex nature.

"Requiem" (Thriller / Crime)

An ex-cop whose life has spiraled out of control reluctantly becomes entangled in a criminal enterprise to settle an old score against the mob. This leads him to embark on a journey which ultimately leads to redemption through the most unlikely of allies.

"Night Comes Falling" (Action-Thriller)

A former covert operative belonging to a shadowy and all but unknown group first established by President Lincoln reluctantly teams up with the daughter of his murdered mentor to prevent his former associates, who enjoy powerful military and political ties, from overthrowing the current presidency and restarting the Cold War in order to preserve their own power and influence.

"Streets of Shame" (Historical Drama, with Paul Mark Ross)

The story is set during the historically real Draft Riots that tore apart New York City for three full days in July of 1863, less than two weeks after the South's disastrous defeat at Gettysburg (the turning point of the war). A dedicated police captain / Union Army veteran attempts to restore order after Confederate agent provocateurs spark massive insurrection that threatens to lead to the collapse of civil authority and perhaps force an early termination to the Civil War on terms favorable to the South.

TELEPLAYS

"Borderland" (Pilot episode and Series Bible created for Original One-Hour Dramatic Series)

Gritty ensemble crime drama centered on both sides of the U.S. / Mexican border featuring a diverse, multicultural cast of characters including a Border Patrol Tracker, female Army Counter-Intelligence Officer, a devoted Mexican cop, and the powerful female head of a Mexican drug cartel better known for her charitable works and legitimate businesses, among others. The series follows the intersecting lives of the characters and explores the complex nature of relations between the two countries, dealing with issues such as drug, human and weapons trafficking as well as more intimate stories about trying to survive in an often harsh environment. It also weaves Southwestern folklore and legends into its stories to create a rich tapestry for character development and to bring in more fantastical story elements along the lines of *The X-Files* or *Fringe* to accompany the edgier criminal investigation and *CSI* like focus on tracking as an investigative, crime-solving tool set.

"The Golem" (Spec sample for "The X-Files")

Mulder and Scully investigate a series of murders in Brooklyn that they eventually learn are the work of the famed Golem, a magical creature made from clay that serves as the protector of Jews during times of trouble.

NOVELS

“Demon Wind” (Based on original screenplay, *in progress*)

Set in Texas in 1863, during the height of the Civil War and loosely based on historical fact. A Texas Ranger of mixed ethnic heritage, who is seriously wounded physically, emotionally and psychologically while serving in the Confederate Army, is dispatched to investigate the brutal vigilante murders of pro-Union immigrants in the northern part of the state. Along the way, the protagonist befriends both a mute runaway slave and an orphaned teenage boy who accompany him on legs of the journey. With the aid of a Lipan Apache scout and a few other allies, our hero comes to the rescue of a town under siege, as part of a larger calculated land grab, from the marauding Confederate guerilla leader William Quantrill and his partisan raiders. The hero's emotional journey comes full cycle as he deals with his feelings for the woman he still loves despite the fact that she married another man after erroneously learning of his "death" in combat.

“Voyages: A Sailor’s Tale” (with Paul Mark Ross & H. Norman McCullough)

Set on Eastern Long Island in the late 1970's, this coming-of-age story depicts the surrogate grandfather relationship between a precocious teenager and an old Scottish sailor/former rumrunner who shares not only his love of sailing with his protégé, but imparts valuable life lessons and wisdom as well.

SHORT STORIES

“The Wine Dark Sea”

A fable written in the style of *“The Alchemist”* by Paulo Coelho, this is a lyrical exploration of the purpose of life from the perspective of a young man in an unspecified time and place who goes to sea to become a sailor and to follow his dreams.

“The Rugaru”

This was conceived as the opening chapter of a possible novella or novel. Our heroine, a successful young doctor who has escaped the poverty and despair of the Lakota Indian Reservation in South Dakota, is summoned home by a cryptic message from her aging father. She arrives to discover that her father, an eccentric mystic and traditional holy man, has been murdered by person or persons unknown. Complicating the mystery is the discovery of large human-like prints near the crime scene, said to belong to the *Rugaru*, the hairy “Big Man” that appears to Indians during troubled times. Our heroine refuses to believe in these “fairy tales,” but finds her beliefs challenged when she finds herself drawn to the federal agent investigating the murder, which leads to a terrorist plot to recover a long-forgotten nuclear bomb lost in a mid-air collision over a remote section of the reservation nearly forty years before. In the course of uncovering and disrupting the plot, our hero and heroine must confront their perceptions of both reality and myth.